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AUTHOR Antonelli, George A.
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ABSTRACT

Teacher education programs which guarantee the effectiveness of their graduates may help to redesign the image and substance of the teaching profession. Doane College (Nebraska), one of the pioneers with educational warranties, bases its program on previous concepts of performance contracting and criterion referenced evaluation. Doane's beginning teachers are warranted to: (1) relate well with students; (2) initiate helping relationships with students; (3) motivate students in positive ways; (4) select relevant goals for students; and (5) keep students active and motivated. The consumer protection aspect of the warranty has elicited both positive responses in terms of reliability, and negative responses in terms of "gimmicks." Other schools having warranty programs include: University of Virgina, Oregon State University/Western Oregon State College, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Eastern Washington University, Northern Colorado University, Purdue University, Montana State University, Emporia State University, and Grand Canyon College. (CB)

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THE EDUCATIONAL WARRANTY: REDESIGNING THE PROFESSION

George A. Antonelli

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THE EDUCATIONAL WARRANTY: REDESIGNING THE PROFESSION

The educational warranty pioneered at Doane College in Nebraska in 1981[1] can be traced back to the Winnetka Plan,[2] performance contracting[3] and criterion-referenced evaluation[4] in the United States. Indeed, career warranties have been utilized in Japan for quite some time.[5]

Disregarding Roy A. Weaver's contention that educational warranties are "quick-fix, cosmetic solutions for improving the performance of teachers that will force teacher educators to defend promises they never intended to make,"[6] nine universities have followed Doane's example: University of Virginia, Oregon State University/Western Oregon State College, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Eastern Washington University, Northern Colorado University, Purdue University, Montana State University, Emporia State University and Grand Canyon College.[7*] Indeed, the Governor's Education Reform Commission has recommended the warranty for all State Colleges in Alabama.[8]

While each of the ten programs has differences as to length of warranty, delivery of guaranteed services, institutional demographics, geographical constituencies and number of warranted clientele, they seem to agree that teacher effectiveness is the most important variable. Perhaps, Bob Barr, Dean of the Oregon State University/Western Oregon State College's School of Education in Corvallis and Monmouth, says it best: "Though the idea is simple, the warranty is urging our school of Education faculty toward a profoundly new way of looking at the preparation of teachers. More than ever before, we have come to realize that all beginning teachers have problems and that the university has an important role to play in addressing those problems."[9]

Keying on a statement in A NATION AT RISK THE IMPERATIVE FOR EDUCATION REFORM, "Colleges and universities offering teacher education programs should be judged by how well graduates meet criteria,"[10] Doane College established a reform program which increased entrance and retention requirements for teacher education majors, developed a support system for first year teacher graduates and warranted the skills of their beginning teachers.

The following skills of Doane's beginning teachers are warranted: "(1) To relate well with students; (2) To initiate helping relationships with students; (3) To motivate students in positive ways; (4) To select relevant goals for students; (5) To prepare well organized units and lesson plans; (6) To select appropriate learning experiences; (7) To build good self-concept; (8) To keep students active and motivated; (9) To have good classroom control; (10) To show poise in a wide range of settings; (11) To be reliable; (12) To provide an attractive learning environment; (13) To be knowledgeable in primary field of study; (14) To show positive response to criticism; and (15) To demonstrate enthusiasm for teaching."[11]
In short, Richard E. Dudley, Chairman of Doane's Department of Education, indicates that the warranty assures graduates and employers that if "there are any 'rough spots' during a Doane education major's first year on the job, the college is there to take responsibility."[12]

It may have been the consumer protection aspect of the warranty concept which led William J. Bennett, The Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, to comment: "With a 'graduate guarantee policy' the university makes a statement of confidence in the quality of its teacher training program while ensuring the children of Arkansas exposure to dynamic and effective classroom experiences."[13]

Dr. Richard Kundel, Executive Director of the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education, seems to support the warranty concept as well for he thinks it will "help tie higher education into a continued responsibility for the professional development of the teacher."[14] As a matter of fact, the NCATE Redesign Package contains a policy very similar to what is now referred to as a warranty program by some of the listed universities. While Howard Caroll of the National Education Association suggests "the idea of a warranty or guarantee is a bit theatrical."[15] He does believe that it is "the serious business of higher education to help first year teachers succeed is important, and that's growing."[16] Dr. S. John Davis, Superintendent of Public Instruction for Virginia, agrees with the latter point: "I hope all of our institutions would be willing to stand behind the teachers they train."[17]

Eastern Washington University's Dean of Education, Bill Katz, indicates that "superintendents have told us it is a marvelous notion ... We think our students will find jobs more easily."[18] Indeed, Katz thinks that "school districts have a vested interest in having their teachers succeed. If they succeed, the students succeed and the parents are happy."[19] Perhaps, Gene I. Maeroff has captured Eastern Washington University's commitment to its students in the January 6, 1985 NEW YORK TIMES. "Unlike General Motors, EWU has no provision for recalling its product, but the university is trying to do the next best thing with the school teachers it graduates."[20] EWU provides free services to all first year teachers who experience difficulty in the classroom in the following areas: (1) Planning; (2) Methods; (3) Subject knowledge; (4) Evaluation techniques; (5) Discipline management; and (6) Use of resources.

"Basically, we are offering assistance to Purdue University-West Lafayette and Westville graduates you employ as first year teachers and who

you believe are not meeting your performance standards for beginning teachers. We are willing to review evaluation reports, consult with you and the first year teacher, assist in planning remediation and offer the first year teacher participation in any relevant Purdue course or non-credit workshop in teacher education during the remainder of the first year of the subsequent summer without charge."[21] It is important to note the disclaimer offered by the Purdue guarantee: "Offering the First Year Teacher Performance Assurance Program in no way implies that Purdue University or its faculty and staff will participate in the Evaluation of teachers in the schools. This responsibility continues to rest totally upon the local school corporation."[22]

Impact on the public schools is a concern of James M. Cooper, Dean of the University of Virginia Currey Memorial School of Education. While Dean Cooper says he "expects to be like the 'Maytag Repairman', who will sit by the telephone, but gets no calls; he hopes that UVA's warranty program for first year teachers will serve not only as a means of quality control and confirmation for his graduates but that it will contribute to the larger purpose of improving communications between the university and the public schools of the commonwealth."[23] However, an opinion column in The Progress-Index, argues that "UVA's warranty plan won't solve the problem mainly becuase it attacks the problem long after it has shown itself. The plan is designed to treat the symptom not the cause."[24]

As if anticipating the latter criticism, Daniel J. Burke of Northern Colorado University which, offers a two year warranty on its graduates, stated "I didn't want it to come off as a gimmick."[25] In addition, Dean Burke indicated he plans to utilize the information collected from the public schools to shape preservice programs at Northern Colorado University as well as to integrate the data into his long range plans for the College of Education.

Yet, the consummate rebuttal is offered by Dr. Lloyd V. Hackley. "The Warranty is the end of a process that begins when a student enrolls at UAPB. Thus, only after the student has been treated to University College, testing seminars, special classes, and advising system that involves our counseling center, Arts and Science Division and the Division of Education, will the warranty be applied. Students who do not participate in required functions will not be granted the warranty."[26] Dr. Hackley continues by delineating the specific conditions of the UAPB Warranty: "(1) The warranty can be activated by either the students or the school district; (2) After a problem has been identified in either delivery or the context, a teacher training team will meet with the student; (3) The teacher training team will be composed of the Dean of the Division of Education, student advisor, content specialist from Arts and Sciences and/or procedural specialist from the Division of Education as well as the local school district supervisor; (4) The teacher training team will study the situation and make recommendations regarding course work, or counseling; (5) A baseline will be thus established from which a gain imporvement will be documented, and (6) Our warranty will cover professional aspects of our students for 3 years after graduation."[27]

It may be of interest to note that the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff is a predominantly Black institution and that its warranty is institutional in nature for it holds not only the Division of Education accountable but also the Division of Arts and Sciences. This approach seems to overrule the cause as well as the symptom arguments for it will provide information that will be helpful to the preservice component of the university, the inservice process of the school district as well as the individual staff development of each warranted graduate. Indeed, U.S. Senator David Pryor made the following comment in the July 9, 1985 CONGRESSIONAL RECORD-SENATE: "The historically Black institutions in my

State of Arkansas have established themselves as integral parts of the community, and despite considerable hardships, continue to provide educational options and access for a number of young Black students. One of these institutions, the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, has begun to direct its attention and resources toward developing more effective teacher education. Several weeks ago, I shared with my colleagues information with regard to UAPB's Educational Warranty Program, which provides assistance to teacher education graduates for 3 years after graduation. I am proud that an institution in my State is in the forefront of this progressive movement."[28] Indeed, UAPB is the only institution of higher learning listed in Governor Bill Clinton's Report Card on Arkansas which highlights the Warranty Program.

Congressional reinforcement for the warranty concept was realized when Representative Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) sponsored "The Teacher Warranty Act of 1985" (H.R. 937) which amended the Higher Education Act to require teacher education institutions who received Federal Funds to provide necessary retraining for any graduate who received a poor evaluation during the first two years of teaching. However, the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education opposed Wyden's bill. A 1985 AACTE resolution states that teacher warranties "involve complex and diverse issues whose effects on the quality of teacher education and teaching are still unknown," but Earley says her group opposes only federally mandated warranties, not individual warranty programs devised by teacher colleges on their own."[29]

While there is no doubt that there are complicated and divergent variables which affect teacher education, ten universities have made a statement which might reflect the following: (1) Establish proactive programs which respond to existing problems with teachers and teacher education; (2) Increase the entrance/exit requirements for teacher education majors; (3) Enhance the employment opportunities for their students; (4) Demonstrate confidence

in the ability of their faculty as well as students; (5) Involve teacher preparation faculties with their public school colleagues; (6) Invite public school teachers and administrators to become equal shareholders in teacher education; (7) Develop a collaborative model which could be utilized to increase communication with the public schools in other areas; (8) Accept accountability by performance as a criterion for curriculum development; (9) Institutionalize a business prospective for program development; and (10) Reconceptualize the process and the content of teacher education.[30]

It is hoped these Warranty Programs will help redesign the image and substance of the progession. Who knows? Future issues of NEWSWEEK,TIME and THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION may feature articles entitled "Why Teachers Suceed," "Help! I Need A Teacher" and "Let's Hear One For The College of Education."

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* North Texas State University will offer a warranty beginning in May of 1986.

George A. Antonelli, Ph.D., Dean, Division of Education, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Pine Bluff, Arkansas 71601

Effective March 1, 1986 - Associate Vice President for Student Services and Special Programs, University of North Carolina System, Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27515 Telephone: (919) 962-1000.

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